

Based on Faith

by Silver Crimsonthorn

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Summary: Adjustment to major changes can be hard, but it becomes even more difficult when the change taking place is unwelcome. Monsters are finding that to be all too true. But friendship and understanding can come from unexpected places. But when that place is a human, how do you know that the friendship and understanding are genuine? Time to take things on faith. Cover is Lorilai.

1. Friends

She sighed as she flicked the last of the egg shells off the siding of her house. '_Now if getting the spray paint and such was as easy...damn.'_ She picked up the bucket near her feet and glared at the overused sponge in the citrusy smelling water.

"Gonna have to go get a new one of these...what a bother."

"A new one of what?"

Lorilai shrieked and flailed at the sudden soft inquiry that came from behind her and peered warily over her shoulder, smiling meekly at her friend from behind a vivid blush. "Hey Blookie."

"Oh noooo, I didn't mean to scare you...I should just goâ€¦!"

Lori turned and jogged a few short steps to stand in front of the small ghost with her arms crossed. "Blookie, what have I told you about that? You don't have to leave when you accidentally scare me like that. You just gotta warn me when you're planning on coming over."

Napstablook stared at her for a moment before fumbling with his phone for a moment and holding it up for her to see.

Lorilai read the screen quickly before pulling out her own phone and glaring at the screen. "I didn't pay over half a grand for you just

to have you refuse to ring randomly, you piece of shit. Sorry, Blooks."

He shrugged lightly and moved towards the bucket. "It's ok...what happened?"

Lori scowled at the side of her house and gestured towards the paint. "Some of the stupid fuckers in this town decided that 'witch' wasn't a good enough slur for me anymore and didn't like that I had removed the beautiful mural they _ever so graciously_ painted for me last time." Her friend frowned at the words scrawled in an angry hand large enough to reach the roof of her porch.

"I...do you want me to call a friend for some help? Oh, you probably have it under control though...sorry if I'm bothering youâ€|"

Lori arched an eyebrow. "You mean that you have friends that would be willing to come help?"

He nodded. "Yeah, uh...I think so. I could ask them if you wanted."

Lori smiled and nodded. "If you could, that would be a big help."

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One text and a short wait later, a black SUV pulled to a stop in her driveway, and several monsters she didn't recognize stepped out of the car, wincing when they noticed the graffiti.

"'Monster fucker, huh? The nerve of some humansâ€|"

"I-I'm sure the h-human can't c-control the actions of other humans, Undyne."

"INDEED, UNDYNE! IF SHE IS FRIENDS WITH NAPSTABLOOK, THEN SURELY SHE CANNOT BE ALL BAD!"

Lorilai waved. "Nice to meet you all, despite the circumstances. Thanks for coming to help out, really. It means a lot to me. I'm Lorilai Eidolon."

"Undyne."

"I'm A-Alphys."

"AND NATURALLY, I AM THE GREAT PAPYRUS! IT IS A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU, LORILAI EIDOLON."

She blinked at Papyrus' formal language. "Please, just call me Lori. All my friends do."

He nodded. "WE HAVE BROUGHT NEW SPONGES AS YOU HAVE ASKED. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE US TO DO WITH THEM, HU-LORI?"

She smiled. "Actually, if you just wanted to break them out of the package, we could have this scrubbed off and whatnot in no time. Would you all mind staying for dinner as payment terribly? I only have enough cash to cover the cost of the new sponges."

Undyne looked at her funnily. "You...want us to stay for dinner as payment?"

Lori blushed. "Well, I'm actually not that bad at cooking, and I have to thank you all and repay you for your help somehow, right?"

Undyne, Alphys, and Papyrus exchanged looks, and then looked at Blooky questioningly, only receiving a shrug in response. Papyrus was the first to turn his attention to Lori again, giving her a smile. "WELL, IF YOU REALLY INSIST, WE COULD STAY."

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Both the cleanup and dinner went smoothly, and Lori smiled as she walked her new friends to their vehicle. "It's been a pleasure. Thanks for all the help, guys!"

"CERTAINLY, HUMAN! IT WAS NO PROBLEM. YOU REALLY MUST TEACH ME HOW TO MAKE THAT TASTY DISH SOMETIME!"

"I'll admit, nerd, that was pretty good food. Next time we stay for dinner, it had better not be for payment, or I'm gonna have to hunt those assholes down and teach them a _lesson._"

"U-Undyne, really, y-you're going to scare the human!"

Lori rubbed the back of her neck and grimaced. "While I really wouldn't mind that, I don't think the town needs another reason to hate monsters or myself even more than they already do."

Undyne paused and nodded thoughtfully. "You may be right about that. Anyway, later nerd!"

Lori laughed, and waved as they pulled out of the drive and were safely on their way down the road. Nodding in satisfaction at their safe departure, she walked back inside and looked at her remaining friend. "Called MTT yet?"

"O-oh...yeah. He said he would be here soon to pick me up."

"Good. I don't want you walking home this late, incorporeal or not."

A car horn sounded outside and Lori peeked out the drapes on her front window. "He's here, Blooks. Lemme walk you out."

She saw her friend into his cousin's car and repeated the process of making sure that he was on his way home safely before heading back into her home, locking the door behind her. She made her way to the sliding glass door that opened to her back yard and looked up. '_What a beautiful full moon.'_'

She let her cardigan fall from her shoulders and slipped out of the rest of her clothes before unhooking the latch on the door and stepping outside into the moonlight within the safety of her privacy fence. She smiled as the light reflected off of her pale skin and filled her eyes, soothing her being.

It took her little time to adjust, and she made her way to the small marble table in her yard and began her practice.

****AN: stupid short, I know. They'll get longer. This is mostly an introductory thing. Do forgive. See you all next time!****

2. Sun Salutations

Chapter One

Sans sighed and glanced at the clock on his phone. His brother was a stickler for punctuality, so being ten minutes late was incredibly odd for him. But ten minutes late was indeed what his brother was right now, and he was starting to get concerned.

[bro, everything ok?]

He slipped his phone back into his jacket pocket and leaned against the wall. '_if paps isn't out here in five minutes, i'm going in_'

Sans looked towards the door as he heard his brother's voice. '_good_.. but who is he talking to?_' Papyrus and his conversation partner rounded the corner as they walked out the door, and sans stiffened. '_a human in a yoga class taught by and for monsters?_'

"AH, YES. HUMAN, THIS IS MY BROTHER, SANS. FORGIVE MY TARDINESS, BROTHER, THE HUMAN AND I WERE SPEAKING WITH THE INSTRUCTOR FOR A MOMENT AND LOST TRACK OF TIME."

Lori blinked and looked at the smaller skeleton, sizing him up for a moment before smiling. "So you're the brother I keep hearing about? Cool."

Sans stiffened a bit and forced a smile. "yeah, you could say 'm pretty..._chill? _so you're the new friend paps keeps talking about?"

"Probably." A noncommittal shrug, despite cutting off Papyrus. "Paps does sure seem to make a hell of a lot of friends though, so that might not be accurate."

"how does a human get into a monsters yoga class?"

"I asked? And paid the fee, of course. For Paps too, even, so that may have helped my case."

"oh?"

"Plus, I helped tutor the instructor's kid for a while. And I helped her out with her garden. Things apparently don't grow quite the same here as they did underground. Not much of a surprise there, really."

"welp, you're the helpful one, ain'tchya, kid?"

Another shrug. "I do what I can, yeah. Hey Paps, you hungry? Sorry I'd cut you off. "

"IT IS NO PROBLEM, HUMAN. I SUPPOSE I COULD EAT SOMETHING. WHY? ARE YOU HUNGRY? OR WOULD YOU LIKE TO TEACH ME HOW TO MAKE SOMETHING?"

Lori laughed and shook her head. "Nah, not right now. I'm too hungry to wait to eat. I was just wondering if maybe you wanted to stop by Muffet's with me. You and your brother maybe? My treat."

"eh, i can tag along if paps wants to go, but i had something from grillby's not too long ago"

Lori looked at Papyrus and pouted playfully. "We can stop at the store to pick up what I would need to teach you how to make something new for dinner afterwards?"

Papyrus didn't have anything further to consider after that remark. "COME ALONG BROTHER, LET US FOLLOW THE HUMAN TO THE CAFE AND THEN GO TO HER PLACE FOR SUPPER."

Sans forced a smile. "yeah, ok paps"

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"Papyrus, dear, would you go get that out of the oven? Don't forget to use oven mitts this time!"

Lori turned to Sans once she was sure that Papyrus was using mitts and smiled softly at him. "'Sup?"

He looked at her for a moment before smirking slightly. "ceiling, of course"

She rolled her eyes. "The sky is even more 'up' than that. So is space. Smart ass." His perpetual smile fell some at getting less of a reaction than he was expecting.

"HUMAN, IS IT SUPPOSED TO BE BROWN NOW?"

"Golden brown to tan, yeah. Give it a bit to let the sauce thicken."

She paused for a moment before heading towards the dining room and the sliding glass door to her back yard. "Say, would you two like to eat out on the patio?"

"CERTAINLY, HUMAN! WOULD YOU LIKE FOR THE GREAT PAPYRUS TO TAKE THE DISH OUT TO THE TABLE?"

"Nah, lemme go out and light the candles I have out there and give it a bit. We still have to make the salad, right? Just keep the potatoes and such covered, and I'll help you with the salad when I get back in. Would you get out a few of the big mixing bowls while I'm outside?"

Papyrus set to work as she slipped outside to light the citronella candles to ward off the abundance of mosquitoes that came with the muggy weather during this time of year. It wasn't so bad right now, especially not in the shade that her home provided on the patio, but the mosquitoes were still more than happy to flock to her for their

meal.

She glanced over at the pot at the edge of her patio, still in the last rays of sun that would peek over her roof until the next day. "Having fun?"

"Humph. I'll admit that the sun is nice, and so is your compost, and so is the break from my idiots, but I wouldn't exactly say that sitting around outside on your patio is _fun_, you moron."

"Glad to see you're feeling better, Ass-riel."

The small flower glared daggers at her. "Frick you."

She snorted with laughter as she continued lighting candles and the like. "Still too intimidated by Toriel to legitimately swear? She isn't even here yet, _Puddin' Pop_."

She perked up at the sound of someone pulling into her driveway. "I may stand corrected." Toriel calling after Frisk telling them to slow down only confirmed her suspicions.

The gate to her yard creaked open and she smiled at the small child barreling towards her, then at the motherly monster walking quickly behind. "Yo Tori. How's the kid been?"

"Asking after Flowey all week." The tall goat monster brought Lori into a firm hug.

"Well, I think it may have just been a nitrogen deficiency in his soil. He was starting to get a titch too big for his pot too, so I replanted him with some nice compost mixed into the soil and such. I've been letting him get his tan on, and he's perked up quite a bit. Quite a lot, actually. Look at his stem!"

Frisk glanced over and clapped in excitement, pointing wildly before signing rapidly to Toriel.

"Why, you're right, my child! Flowey _has_ sprouted leaves."

Papyrus peeked his head out the back door and gasped. "HUMAN! WHY DID YOU NOT TELL US THAT THE QUEEN HAD ARRIVED WITH THE SMALLER HUMAN? And that you had that annoying houseplant in your possession! "

Lori grinned at his after thought and shrugged. "I knew Tori and the kid were coming over to pick up the Floweypot since I told them earlier that he was doing better and that they could come pick him up, so I made sure to get enough ingredients so that everyone could stay for dinner."

Sans peeped around his brother and gave a short wave. "yo, tori. 'sup, kiddo?"

Frisk smiled excitedly and immediately began signing to Sans and Papyrus, and Toriel smiled before placing a paw on Lori's shoulder. "Thank you for helping Asriel for Frisk and I. I know he can be difficult to get along with."

Lori smiled and shrugged. "Iunno, he and I came to an agreement, I

think. Plus, he's rather docile when he's photosynthesizing after a nice big pot of compost. Not that I've told him what compost is, mind you." Toriel looked at her funnily, and she laughed. "I can teach you and Frisk to make compost later. You'll want to keep giving some to Asriel to keep his soil nutritious."

Toriel smiled and gestured towards the brothers. "I am pleased to see that you get along so well with these two. They are good, reliable friends."

Lori smiled and lit the last candle. "Well, I trust Blook with my life, and if he considers you all friends, then it's pretty safe to say that I would too. He's never introduced me to someone I didn't end up considering a friend."

Toriel smiled before pausing briefly to sniff at the air. "What is that smell? I recognize your candles by now, but there is something else that smells simply _wonderful_."

Lori gave a toothy grin and gestured towards the door. "Why don't you come inside and sit for a few while Paps and I throw that salad together."

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She and Papyrus had the salad together in short order, though it would have taken even less time if she hadn't taken the time to explain what everything that was going into the salad was right then and there. His curiosity was endearing and adorable, but often a bit time consuming, though she rarely minded.

Between the adults present, the food, plates, serving utensils, and knives made their way to the large patio table. Insisting upon helping, Frisk had been given the task of picking out five forks from the drawer and bringing them to the table, a task that they performed admirably.

"Ok, Papyrus, would you like to do the honors of explaining what's on the menu for tonight?"

He posed valiantly and grinned widely. "CERTAINLY, TALLER HUMAN! FOR TONIGHT'S LATEST CULINARY MASTERPIECE, THE HUMAN AND I HAVE CREATED SEVERAL MEATLOAVES, AN EXTRA LARGE AND EXTRA CHEESY DISH OF SCALLOPED POTATOES, AND A SALAD WITH ROMAINE LETTUCE, KALE, CUCUMBERS, CARROTS, AND MICRO-GREENS! THE MICRO-GREENS MAKE IT EXTRA NUTRITIOUS!"

"And we have honey mustard, blue cheese dressing, ranch, and a few other dressings in the fridge. I also threw together a balsamic vinaigrette with some sesame seeds that I like to use for myself, but there's plenty to go around if that's what peeps wanna use."

Sans stared curiously at the meatloaf. "eh, kid? what's that red stuff on the meatloaf? and why is there ketchup on the table?"

Lori pointed with the end of the serving spoon for the potatoes, having gone for the starch immediately. "Chili sauce, which is pretty much just ketchup with chili powder in it, and the bottles are for you. Surprisingly, when people tell me things, I tend to remember them. And your brother has mentioned your affinity for ketchup _repeatedly_. There's more in the fridge, all I ask is that you don't

get into the EZ-squeeze bottle, since that one is for my use on like...grilled cheese an' whatnot. The rest are strictly for you."

He nodded, and got a few slices of the meatloaf before passing the dish off to his right and accepting the potatoes. He turned down the salad, passing it on without taking any.

Lori looked around and smiled. "Getting kinda dark, but it's nice. Look at the lightning bugs."

Everyone looked out and saw the small bioluminescent insects, but Sans was the only one to speak. "kind of a big yard. where's your, uh...property line?"

Lori flushed crimson. "About a tenth of a mile beyond the tree line. This house is sitting on about 30 acres of property, a lot of it woods and such. Unfortunately, the house is so close to the town that some of the delinquents think it's funny to come all the way out here while I'm in town and spray graffiti or whatever. Once, they hopped my fence and shredded my garden to bits." She spoke quietly and poked at her meatloaf with her fork. "I don't exactly fit in around here, and ever since my dad moved with his new wife clear across the country after she poisoned him against me, I've been all alone out here for the most part.."

She cleared her throat, adjusted how she was sitting and smiled, looking around at everyone else seated at the table. "I was lucky, and got to meet Blooky, and he introduced me to all of you. So, really, I'm kinda thankful I didn't just sell the property and move on. I'm sure that if you want, since it's not a school night, I could rustle up a jar for you to go catching lightning bugs, if you wanted to, Frisk. There's obviously enough room for it."

"why don't you just report them to the cops or whatever?"

Lori looked over at Sans with shock evident on her face. "Huh?"

"the jerks that keep breaking your stuff. why not call the cops on them?"

"Because I can't get proof of who it is that does it. Tried hiding cameras once, and they just stole the damn cameras. Besides, I don't really think the cops would do much about it, and even then, it'd just be like a fine or something. not exactly going to deter those...those...ugh. Anyway, let's eat, shall we? I made cheesecake for dessert."

The rest of the meal went rather uneventfully, which Lori was thankful for. Sans had cracked a few puns, terrible ones at that, one of which sent Toriel into a fit of giggles so bad that she nearly choked on her drink. Lori had smiled at his jokes, but managed to avoid choking, since she was inevitably actively eating or drinking every time he cracked a pun.

Dessert was brought out eventually, and was enjoyed whole-heartedly by everyone present. Lori slipped inside and found a mason jar and brought it back outside for Frisk to use to catch the fireflies. It was now dark enough that it was becoming a bit hard to see, so the lanterns hanging from various stakes around the patio were lit, and a

few more brought to the table. They all watched Frisk skip and jump around the back yard for a few moments in companionable silence.

"Thank you for allowing Frisk free run of your yard to chase insects. They really do enjoy those ones, and there isn't much room for them to run like this in the city."

Lori waved her hand and smiled. "No biggie. Really, bring them out whenever they want. I have a pool too, so that will be nice for them during the summers. I don't mind having company at a-"

She whipped her head to the direction Frisk was in, and her smile fell immediately. "Fuck."

Frisk was running back towards the patio at full speed, mason jar abandoned, a dark form behind them. Lori took off running towards Frisk, leading the others to jolt upright from their chairs immediately and yell after her questioningly. A single, breathless word was their only response; "coywolf."

Lori reached Frisk and scooped the child up and around in a single motion, holding them close and away from the predator in question, expecting the claws and fangs to come moments after.

But nothing came.

Hesitantly, she turned around, not knowing what to expect. She gasped lightly at seeing Sans there, eye and hand ablaze, holding the coywolf in place. "whaddaya want me to do with it, kid?"

Lori put Frisk down and slowly approached the immobilized beast and looked it over. "It's rabid. Can you kill it? Or should I go get-"

Sans had put it out of its misery before she could finish, his magic fading once the deed was done. Lori swallowed hard. "Thanks."

"dun mention it."

Lori looked down at Frisk, who had gotten her attention by tugging on the leg of her shorts. "Yeah?"

*I'm sorry I lost your jar.

"they said they're sorry 'bout the jar."

Lori shook her head. "It's ok. That was a dollar, tops, and we can find it in the morning. You're irreplaceable. Ok? Let's just...go back to the patio. And maybe inside."

*Inside sounds good.

Lori laughed. "I might not know much sign, but I recognize 'good', and that facial expression says it all. C'mon."

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Toriel exhaled sharply, shocked at news of exactly what had happened. "Oh my. I am terribly sorry that happened, my child. Are you

alright?"

Frisk nodded, cuddled up to Lori, who had insisted that hot chocolate was what the doctor ordered.

"I'm really sorry about that. My best guess is that the coywolf was prowling around out there, out of its mind because of the rabies, and Frisk got close enough for it to pick up on them. Had I known it was that close, we wouldn't have even eaten outside unless I'd brought the gun."

Everyone else in the room froze. "you have a gun?"

Lori blinked. "I live alone on property surrounded by woods. There's coyotes, coywolves, and other predators. And, like you just saw, some of them have rabies. It would take animal control way too long to get here. So yes, I have a gun for 'oh lordy loo, there's a wild animal that I have to put down or kill in self-defense'. The last time I had to use it was on a coyote that decided that, even though there's about 27 acres of woods around my house, it needed to have its babies under my porch. It kept attacking me, and I couldn't leave my house. Animal control had refused to come out before, which is why I had bought the gun in the first place. And so there you have it. It's been used once. I may as well not own it. I eventually gave up and bought a thumbprint scanning lock, because I kept forgetting the combination on the gun safe."

Papyrus and Toriel relaxed considerably at the explanation, but Sans remained fairly tense.

*What's wrong?

Sans caught notice and forced himself to relax. "nothin', kiddo. just still a bit shocked from your close encounter earlier."

They nodded and gave a small noise of acceptance, giving a pronounced yawn that caused Lori to look down at them and smooth their hair down. "Tired?" Frisk didn't respond, their breathing evening out into the slow, measured breaths of sleep.

"Looks like Frisk is out for the night." Lori looked over at Flowey, finally peeking out from around the book she had loaned him. She nodded.

"Probably. Enjoying the book?"

Flowey scoffed and looked to the side. "Hardly. But...just in case...do you...happen to have the second book?"

Lori laughed and nodded. "Yeah. I have the whole series. I'm sure that took a lot of effort to say."

He sighed. "You have no idea."

Lori looked over at Toriel and noted the faint circles under her eyes. "Y'all wanna stay here tonight? I have enough spare bedrooms for everyone, and you look kinda bushed."

Toriel smiled sheepishly and smoothed out her skirt. "I am fine, my child. Truly. I would not want to impose upon you like that."

Lori frowned and arched an eyebrow as she stared at Toriel.
"Honey...I know what it's like on that side of town now, and the bags under your eyes could carry groceries. It's ok to take a night off. You won't be imposing or anything, I promise."

Papyrus gawked at the bluntness of Lori's statement, and saw that Sans was doing the same. "H-HUMAN, YOU RE-"

Toriel held up a hand to stop Papyrus. "No, Papyrus. She is right. I have been sleeping poorly of late, and both you and Sans are just as familiar as she is with the 'why' of it," Toriel sighed. "if you are certain that it will not be a bother, my child, I will accept your offer."

Lori smiled softly. "If it'll make you feel better, you can cook breakfast as payment. If Sans and Papyrus wanted to spend the night too, I'm sure it would be simplyâ€|" She paused, looking at Sans with a stupid, lopsided grin. "..._font-tastic_"

Papyrus groaned and buried his face in his hands. "BETWEEN YOU AND MY BROTHER...HONESTLY, HUMAN."

Sans stared open mouthed. '_maybe she isn't all bad'_

Lori giggled at Sans' expression and silence. "Sorry, was that too _bold_ for you?"

"HUMAN!"

Sans snapped out of his silence with a grin. "nah, kiddo. those were pretty _striking_, though."

"SANS!"

Lori scoffed. "Weak. Anyway, Paps, you wanna carry Frisk to their bed for the night, since they're already out?"

"CERTAINLY, HUMAN. WHERE-"

"End of the hall, immediate left. Tori, you're to the right, right across the hall. The spare rooms are always ready to go, so...you know...mi casa, su casa and whatnot."

Toriel nodded. "Thank you, my child. You are so very, very sweet. I think I shall head to bed shortly."

Papyrus scooped up Frisk and carried them down the hall to the room Lori had mentioned, and tucked them in gently before sneaking out of the room and closing the door. Lori gave a questioning thumbs up to Papyrus, who smiled and returned the gesture twofold.

"hey paps, you gettin' sleepy yet?"

Papyrus sat back down in the recliner that he had been sitting in prior to taking Frisk to bed, and frowned. "PERHAPS, BROTHER, BUT I DO NOT WISH TO INSULT OUR FRIEND BY GOING TO SLEEP SO EARLY."

Lori waved her hand dismissively. "Dude. If you need to sleep, then you need to sleep. I'm not gonna call you a party pooper or anything."

Hells, I'd probably call you sensible, because I'm known to be up at all hours of the night."

He nodded softly, then gasped, bringing his hands to his mouth. "OH NO, BROTHER! WE DO NOT HAVE MY STORY BOOK!"

Lori paused and held out a hand. "Wait, like bedtime story?"

Papyrus nodded tearily. "Paps...you know how much of a bibliophibian I am. If I didn't have bookshelves, I'd have to be able to breathe paper. You could borrow one of my books for tonight, maybe? Shoot, I could even read it to you if you wanted."

Sans arched a browbone. "you have kid books?"

She pouted and looked away. "Not 'kid', per se...but I do have a lot of the cooler young adult series. They're quality literature."

Sans laughed. "'m not gonna question your tastes. up to you paps."

Papyrus paused for a moment, thinking, before he softly gave his answer. "I-if it's alright with you and the human...I'd like for her to do my story tonight. What would you recommend, human?"

Lori blinked, not having expected Papyrus to take her up on her offer. "Shit, really? You're even letting me pick?" Papyrus nodded quietly, a faint orange tint lighting his cheek bones.

'_Holy shit, that is adorable.'_

"Welllllll...what would you like to hear about? Wizards? Demi-gods? Elves and dwarves? Valiant quests? There's a whole lot."

Papyrus shrugged sheepishly. "Well, that's helpful. Guess I'll just go ahead and pick on my own." She walked over to a shelf on the wall of that room and pulled and older, well-worn book off of the shelf. "C'mon. I'll only read you the first chapter or two. Don't want to keep you up all night."

Sans' eye lights followed the human and his brother down the stairs. '_at least she isn't entirely untrustworthy.'_

He winced in pain and flexed his right hand gingerly inside the pocket of his jacket. '_seems like we're in for a storm tonight.'_

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**Pain, blinding and white, seared through his bones. The face, which he never could remember, not really, loomed above him, instruments shining white in the overly bright and sterile light. **

**He struggled to get free, the restraints holding him fast to the cold metal table. "Hold still," the same deep, familiar voice said. He continued to struggle anyway, the sound of the drill coming closer and gaining intensity as he struggled, making the restraints dig into him further, holding him fast to the cold metal table. **

**"I said hold still," reiterated the voice as the drill came into

view, the bit entering his eye socket as he screamed.

**

0-0-0-0-0

Lori gasped and lurched forward, fear coursing hot through her veins. She hastily looked around, surveying her surroundings. '_Nothing? What the hell? Why am I- '_

Realization dawned on her as she heard someone close a door in the hallway quietly, and then shuffle towards the stairs to go up to the main floor. '_That didn't sound like Paps...maybe Sansâ€|?'_

She slipped out of bed and grabbed whatever loose clothes she could find close at hand. Deeming herself decent enough, she slipped out of her room and padded silently down the hall and up the stairs. As she reached the top of the stairs, she saw a figure coming out of the kitchen and entering the living room, leaving the lights off.

She frowned slightly, still feeling the fear coming off him in waves. She moved to the living room and turned on a small lamp in the corner without speaking before heading to the kitchen to put on a kettle of water. Pulling out a vacuum-sealed enameled ceramic jar, a few mugs, and some other necessities, she began portioning out two bags of loose tea leaves.

She heard little movement from the other room as she finished prepping the mugs of tea, and sighed. Carrying the mugs out of the kitchen and into the living room, she offered one to Sans, who was slouched into the love seat with an open bottle of ketchup in one hand, the other in his shorts pocket. She noted the blank stare on his face and frowned even deeper.

She sat the two mugs down on the floor, took the bottle from his hand and screwed the cap back on, then handed him the mug of tea. The warmth shook him from his reverie, and she smiled softly at him. "That bad, huh?"

He watched her quietly as she picked her mug up and moved silently across the room to plop down into the recliner she had been in earlier. Her hands wove together around the mug as she used it to warm her hands. Sans hesitated for a moment before sighing inwardly, taking his other hand out of his pocket, and imitating her.

She nodded in approval. "A cold drink might help you wake up and shake off sleep, but a warm one will help soothe frayed nerves and try to bring you back to a good, calm state. Didn't know what you'd like best so I just made a second cup of oolong." She paused, tracing circles on her mug with one of her index fingers. "You...you wanna talk about it?"

He glared at her as she took a sip, her eyes still on him. "why?"

She frowned and looked off to the side, her index fingers still fidgeting with her mug. "Because talking can help. Nobody is ever around when I have my nightmares, and...well...I know that I'd appreciate it if someone offered an ear after I've had a particularly bad dream."

"how the hell did you even know that I had had a nightmare? how did you even know I was awake?"

She bit her lip quietly.

He stopped, and the lights faded from his eyes as realization dawned on him. "***how did you know frisk was being chased, earlier? you weren't looking that way, and there was no way you could have heard them. you had better start explaining. now."**

She winced and stared intently at her mug. "Look. I know you don't trust humans, but why would I hurt people that I consider friends? I'm closer with Paps, Frisk, and Tori than I am with my own family. I am legitimately closer with you and your friends...your family...than I am with literally any of my own kind, save for Frisk. So I understand your concern. Really. Humans are awful, and I don't blame you a single bit if you hate me just because of my species. I'm way ahead of you on hating me, though, so you're a bit late to the party,"

"Not all humans were ignorant to magic before monsters started coming out of the woods surrounding Mount Ebott. Some people knew that magic existed, and claimed to 'practice' it, with most not really getting any results. Others, like myself, know it exists. And we have some shred of it in our some of us actually own up to that fact, and accept that it's a part of us. Nothing flashy or fancy like monsters have, usually...but magic nonetheless." She readjusted herself in her seat, clearing her throat gently.

"I'm an empath. I felt Frisk's fear. I knew something was wrong, but not what, not really. That's why I just took off running. I didn't know whether the fear was merited or not. I...I also felt your fear, Sans. I can 'tune out' or whatever you want to call it, but only if I'm awake. When I'm asleep, it's different. For starters, there's normally nobody close enough that I'd be able to pick up on anything. I do live alone, after all."

Sans nodded, still staring at her, though with a kinder, more approachable face. His eye lights had returned as he listened, nodding softly when she stopped for breath.

She looked at him warily. "Monsters...monsters are different, though. If human emotions are given off like breezes, then monsters...monsters give off their emotions in gales. They're so raw, and unobstructed. It's taken some getting used to. It's been like I've been getting slapped with bold face text, instead of blurry, unclear crap that takes time to get used to reading. So when you had your nightmare, it was like a hurricane of raw, unadulterated fear that punched straight through the ignorance of sleep. I woke up with a fight or flight response. I knew it was bad. So I...I thought you might not mind some company. I wanted to try to help."

She sighed and took a long drink of her tea before setting her mug down on the table next to her. "If you'd like me to leave...then I will."

Sans exhaled sharply and rubbed the back of his neck. "look...i...would rather not talk about it. but if you wanted to...I wouldn't mind the company."

Lori blushed and smiled softly. "Ok. Want me to join you over there so we can watch a movie or something? Wait...what time is it?" She glanced around, her eyes settling on the antique analogue clock in the corner, the light reflecting gently off the glass dome and the golden balls of the swirling pendulum that kept time with the seconds that passed. '_Five thirty-three?_'

She nodded. "Sorry, I hadn't taken time to look at a clock or grab my phone or anything when I was getting up. You wanna see something cool?"

He shrugged. "why not?"

She grinned and grabbed the throw blankets off the back of the couch. "Follow me."

She padded quickly yet gracefully to the sliding glass door at the back of the house and unlocked it hastily before stepping outside onto the patio in her bare feet. Sans followed lazily, shutting the door behind him halfway slowly as to not make much noise. He looked around to find her, finally finding her halfway up a ladder on the side of the house that he hadn't noticed before. She looked down at him. "You comin"?"

He followed carefully, trying his best to not slip on the rungs built carefully into the house with, thankfully, flat, textured stepping areas. Lori crouched down and offered him a hand as he reached the top, helping him pull himself up onto the roof carefully. She walked across the slightly slanted area with practiced ease, leading him by the hand carefully to their destination, a flat section of the roof pointed at an area of the tree line surrounding her house that was short enough to give a clear view of the mountains off in the east. A few lawn chairs were already up there, and she handed him the second throw blanket before wrapping the first around her shoulders and settling into one of the chairs.

He looked at her questioningly, and she smiled. "Give it a few minutes. You'll see." He shrugged and followed suit, staring off over the tree line. His mouth opened slightly as the first golden-pink rays of light peeked out from over the mountain top.

" 's...wow."

Lori looked at him and smiled, watching him more than the sunrise. His eye lights had enlarged somewhat at the view, and she was relieved to find no traces of fear left in his current emotions. She turned her attention back to the sunrise, enjoying the view herself. "Feeling better?"

He looked over at her, his smile genuine. "thanks. really."

She nodded. "No prob, man."

3. Things That Kill Me for 200, Alex

Chapter Two

**Songs, none of which I own: Dani California-Red Hot Chili Peppers,

Semi-Charmed Life-Third Eye Blind, Inside Out-Eve 6**

I also do not own Undertale.

**I added a cover picture earlier! That's my own personal rendition of Lori on there, so there ya go! Feel free to R&R. This chap is a little bit kinda hinky (good English there, I know.) There's time skips and such ahead...but things will get smoother. This is still kinda introductory stuff. **

**Thanks for reading! **

Lorilai paused and glared at the papers in front of her before reorganizing them into the proper order. She looked up at the small blue ghost on the other side of the glass as she rubbed her fingers on a small block of yellow wax. "We ready?"

Napstablook gave her a small nod. "Whenever you're ready."

Lori rolled her neck and shoulders and grabbed the bow off the music stand and rolled her wrist around with it in her hand a few times. The large headphones over her ears shifted slightly as she got into position behind her cello. She ignored it as she gently rubbed her fingers over the strings and began to draw out the first few low, almost mournful notes. She moved with the tempo of the music, letting it flow through her as she drew the notes forth, glancing up to read the sheet music as needed.

Blooky watched as his friend became one with the music she had agreed to help him record for a mix he was making. She was certainly something else, and he was glad that she wasn't like most other humans. He pressed the button to stop recording as she stopped. "Th-that was great."

She grinned toothily at her friend through the glass. "Thanks. Say, we've been at this a while. You wanna take a break? We could go grab something from Muffet's or something."

Blooky shrugged. It wasn't like he was going to argue with his friend, who, unlike him, needed to eat regularly. She set the cello in its stand and slipped on her sunglasses which, if she was honest, were more for fashion than keeping the sun out of her eyes. She was fairly certain that John Lennon and Ozzy Osbourne, who wore similar glasses, would agree.

Her foot came in contact with the push bar on the door out of the studio and she shoved it open and walked out of it, catching it with her hip to let Blooky out behind her. He followed, and she glanced at the time on her phone before opening up her messages to check the unopened message that she had.

[sans: yo, what was that book you started readin' to paps? he's kept talkin' 'bout it and wants to get a copy.]

She grinned and quickly tapped out her reply as Blooky locked up the studio door.

[Dude, it was "the hobbit". If you promise to be stupid careful with it, you can borrow my copy to keep reading to him at night. I don't mind being a library for my friends. Flowey still has my copy of

eragon.]

She slipped her phone back into her back pocket and looked over at Blooky. "So. Muffet's or Grillby's?"

"W-we could go to a h-human restaurant, you knowâ€|"

She looked at him funnily. "And deal with those assholes? I'm perfectly willing to come to your defense against...well, anyone really...but I don't want to have to deal with humans thinking that we're infringing on their _territory_ or some shit."

'_But it would only be me they would really be objecting toâ€|'_
Blooky frowned at that thought.

"Blooks?" He looked up and saw his friend's concerned look.

Lori patted his head gently. "C'mon. Let's go pay our favorite hothead a visit."

Thankfully, Grillby's was pretty much just around the corner from the small studio that she had helped Blooky rent, and so the August heat didn't get to take much of a toll on them. The chorus of 'hello's sounded off as some of the regulars recognized one of their own, and she gave a short wave above her head to no one in particular. Her eyes were too focused on the ground of the fairly dimly lit room to notice the familiar figure that was already seated at the bar.

" 'sup?"

She looked up and waved as she took a seat to his right, Blooky sitting to her right. "Oh hey. Did you get my text?"

"yeah, but 'm not sure why you let the houseplant borrow your book"

Lori shrugged. "He may be kind of a spoiled, bratty asshole, but I struck up a deal with him. So long as he works on keeping his behaviour and such in check, he can borrow my books so he has something new to read. He gets his love of reading honestly. Tori borrows a book every week or so. So far, he's been doing pretty good. All I have to do when he starts to act out is remind him that if he douches his behaviour up, that he loses book privilege, and he straightens his shit right out."

Sans grunted, impressed that someone other than Frisk had finally gotten through to the flower.

Grillby's came over and took her order, Blooky politely declining to have anything. Lori smiled at him. "So whatcha been up to?"

Sans shrugged. "nothin' much. damage control, mostly. some asshole broke into tori's place last night. and torched her car."

Lori's jaw dropped. "WHAT?! Why the hell did nobody tell me? Shit. Is everyone ok?"

Sans nodded, closing his eyes. "yeah, and tori keeps her car pretty clean, so they didn't lose much. she woke up and went to investigate

before much of anything happened in her place. they only really got her purse. she ain't feeling so safe anymore, though. came and spent the rest of the night with me and paps, once she was done talking with the cops."

Lori thanked Grillby for her food and grabbed a fry. "She going back to stay at her place?"

Sans shrugged. "it's only her n the kid, so she isn't really comfortable with the idea, but she might. no tellin' what'll happen to her stuff if she ain't there."

Lori nodded and pulled out her phone, wiping her fingertips on her denim shorts to try to avoid getting so much grease on her screen protector, and tapped out a text.

[Sans told me about what happened last night. You shouldn't have to worry about that kind of stuff on top of everything else. If you want, you and Frisk can move in with me, and I'll tell your jackass slumlord of a landlord to stuff it up his tailpipe. Give me the word, and I'll have a moving van in front of your place in no time, ok?]

Sans glanced over at her. "texting tori?"

Lori set her phone on the counter heavily. "Hells yeah, I was texting Tori. That's totally ridiculous that someone would do that to her." Lori glared at her burger before taking a large, rather "un-ladylike" bite of it. She chewed for a moment before grumbling with a partially full mouth about 'nobody fucking with family' of hers and getting away with it. She looked over at her friend and frowned. "Take Blooky, for example. Somebody fucks with him and I find out about it and I'm on their asses like white on rice. It's the same for any of my friends. You included."

Blooky blushed and smiled softly. "Y-you don't have toâ€¦"

Lori stopped with a fry halfway to her mouth and pointed at Blooky using the fry. "Sorry 'bout your luck, sweet pea. I'm gonna anyway." She viciously took a bite of the fry and nodded, her point having been made.

Her phone chimed and she wiped her fingers again before picking it up. "Damnâ€¦"

Sans arched a brow bone. "'sup kiddo?" She handed him her phone and grabbed another fry.

[tori: It is perfectly fine, my child. Neither Frisk nor I were hurt, and I cannot impose upon you like that. I have asked Asgore to spend the night on the couch for a week or so, in case the thieves attempt to come back. My insurance will cover replacing my vehicle, so there is no need for you to worry. With Asgore spending the next week at my apartment, I will still have vehicle access until I get my new car. Thank you for your concern, dear.]

Sans looked up at Lori, who seemed fairly unaffected, and handed her back her phone. She tapped out a reply, fairly short, given how quickly she did so, and went about finishing her food. "at least everything is going smoothly, right?"

Lori shrugged. "Yeah, I just wish there was something I could do to help. At least things weren't worse, and the community is close-knit enough that if she needed anything, at least someone would manage to help her, or there would be a group effort of some kind."

Sans nodded, smiling. "yeah, and if i know us, you're considered a member of the monster community. by the humans, too."

"Eh, monsters are nicer around here anyway, so I don't think I'm losing out on much."

He shrugged. "no comment."

She laughed, standing up and dusting crumbs off her outfit. "YO GRILLBS! YOU KNOW THE DEAL, MAN! Anyway, Sans, Blook and I gotta get back to work or MTT is gonna have our heads for not getting shit done on time. You should tune in to his show on Friday. Ciao!"

He watched as she jogged out the door, the small ghost following close behind. He shook his head and smiled as he returned to his bottle of ketchup.

0-0-0-0-0

The rest of the week had gone smoothly, which Lori thought was incredibly fortunate. This did not, however, put her nerves any more at ease about what was about to happen. She and Blooky glanced at one another and exhaled sharply. "You ready for this, Blook?"

His blush deepened, which Lori hadn't thought possible.
"Y...yeah."

She cleared her throat. "Right...just like we practiced then."

He slowly phased into her body, and she stiffened, a feeling like ice water trailing down her spine catching her by surprise, like every other time.

They hadn't been intending to find this little quirk of human anatomy, but when a horror movie had scared the two of them badly enough that they had jumped and moved to cling to one another, they inadvertently discovered that he could possess her body just like Mettaton possessed his mechanical one, or their cousins had possessed their dummies. He had the advantage of having a copilot that could take over if he wasn't sure how to do something, and someone to reassure him and give him the confidence to maintain possession over a corporeal object, without having to form a permanent attachment.

Lori was willing to help, which made things simpler, she imagined, over having to forcibly possess something for an extended period of time. It wasn't really that bad, actually...it was like she was on autopilot, unless Blooky needed help with anything. Mentally, they just had a conversation. Ultimately, she could exert control over her body if needed, but since Blooky always asked her permission before he did...anything really, there wasn't really any need.

'_You good, man?'_

_ 'Y-yeahâ€¦|'_

_ 'Right. I'll get to cosmetics then. We don't wanna look bad, or MTT will kill us.'_

She rolled her shoulders and approached the vanity where her cosmetics were laid out. "See? This is why I said 'before'."

'_O-oh...your eyesâ€¦|'_

She shrugged. "It's whatever. It just changes the colors I use."

She pulled out an iridescent white eyeshadow and red eyeliner, applying them skillfully around her now unearthly blue, glowing eyes. "Light brown and glowey baby blue are two _very _different colors." She nodded, satisfied that her winged eyeliner was as even as it was going to get. Blooky reached over to grab his headphones and slipped them on around her neck.

'_Ready when you are. You're the performer here.'_

She snorted. "Does that make you the brains behind this operation? I'm just the gripping power."

She felt his happiness and what she could only describe as a 'cute little internal blush', and smiled, walking out the door to go to the stage.

0-0-0-0-0

Sans and Papyrus couldn't believe what they were seeing. They tuned in like Lori had suggested-not that Papyrus would _ever_ miss The Mettaton Show-and there she was, Lori, waving to the crowd, evidently the guest musician for the show tonight.

But something was wrong.

Her eyes were different. So different that the change was visible out on the far shots.

Her eyes were glowing blue. Blue with _magic. _

Sans dove for his phone and began demanding that she explain what the hell was going on.

Papyrus was clearly enjoying her performance, which was, Sans had to admit, pretty good. But he recognized the telltale signs of Napstablook's mixes, and spotted his headphones around Lori's neck. '_whaâ€¦|?'_

0-0-0-0-0

Her first set went off without incident, and she slipped her phone out of her pocket once she got off camera, curious to see who had been blowing up her phone.

[sans: what. the fuck. your eyes. explain.]

0-0-0-0-0

[It's nothing bad, I promise. Blooky is just borrowing my hands. I'll explain later, I promise.]

He sighed and shrugged, turning his attention loosely back to the television. '_guess that's all the answer i'm getting, huh?_'

The stage lights reflected brightly off of her neon blue and cyan bangs as she jogged back on stage for her next set, stopping behind the turntable and waving, a huge smile spreading across her face, her deep purple lipstick making sure her smile stood out against the pale backdrop of her face.

"Right, so for this part of the show, I thought we'd do something a bit different. Hope you enjoy it."

She got to work like before, but after a lengthy intro, began singing with the tracks, and Sans recognized it as a song off an album that Lori had burned him a copy of when he mentioned that he was looking for new music. He was less focused on the lyrics than he would have liked, more focused on her voice, and the look she was giving the camera that was trained on her face.

_I would swallow my pride, _

_I would choke on the rhymes, but the lack thereof would leave me empty inside. _

_I would swallow my doubt, turn it inside out, _

_Find nothin' but faith in nothin'. _

_Heart in a blender, _

_Watch it spin round to a beautiful oblivion. _

_Rendez-vous, then I'm through with you. _

_I want something else, _

_To get me through me through this, _

_Semi charmed kind of life, baby, baby, _

_I'm not listening when you say, _

_California, rest in peace, _

_Simultaneous release. _

_California, show your teeth. _

_She's my priestess, _

_I'm your priest. _

Yeah, yeah, yeah

Sans blinked. The lyrics he caught weren't all familiar, and he could tell they weren't from the same song, though he did suppose that,

since the ghost was involved, everything that was going on was a remix. Not that any of it sounded bad, especially not with the vocals that Lori was providing. Given the look on Mettaton's face, it isn't what he was expecting out of his cousin either. It was fairly far from his norm, and definitely had a heavy hand from Lorilai in its production.

Her second set was apparently the conclusion to tonight's show, because once she had finished, Mettaton was doing his out-tro, waving with her, and then escorting her off the stage. Papyrus looked back and grinned at him excitedly. "I DID NOT KNOW THE HUMAN WAS SO SKILLED AT MUSIC! WOWWIE!"

Sans nodded and grinned. "yeah, paps. seems like she's full of surprises."

0-0-0-0-0

Time passed fairly quickly after that, between social time with her new friends, and working with Napstablook for follow-up performances. Lori was happy, occupied, and felt welcome and accepted. After finding Asgore on the couch, nobody had bothered Toriel again, much to everyone's relief. The time they spent together that week had brought the king and his former queen closer again, and they were in the beginning stages of courting again, testing the waters to see if there was hope for them after all.

Lori would head over to Sans and Papyrus' place and hang with Frisk and the 'skelebro's' as she liked to call them, ensuring that the chills was fed and bathed and put in bed at appropriate times when Toriel and Asgore were out on dates. Frisk and Papyrus would routinely sleep together on those nights, demanding that Lori read their story, going wide eyed and intently curious as she would read more chapters out of The Hobbit.

August left them behind, and so did a good portion of the summer heat. September brought with it a good deal of rain, and a fairly steep drop in temperature. Lori trudged through the puddles and the rain to the studio with Blooky after a late lunch break in that day's recording session, not noticing the figure watching them from the shadows. They unlocked the door and stepped inside, Lori grabbing a towel beside the door to dry off her hair before she slipped off her leather jacket and sat it and the towel in a chair by the door.

Their studio was small, having only the recording room, the room with the tech and the door to the outside, and a small storage closet in the corner of the room beside the computers. It had been a small, local radio station, but due to a lack of funding, they had had to shut down, leaving the place vacant for a number of years, since it had been highly specialized and wasn't able to be repurposed.

Lori took off her boots, slipped her phone on to silent, and headed into the recording room, locking the door behind her out of habit. She sat down to look up at Blooky and ask him what he wanted to work on now, but her smile fell when she looked out the window to the sound bank. Blooky had his back to her, and he was trembling. Her brows furrowed as she peered further around the corner to see what was wrong, and as she noticed the dark figure, knife in hand, her eyes widened in fear.

This is what those rumors had been about. A man, large and intimidating, with a knife. Killing monsters and consuming their remains to try to gain a portion of their magic, stealing their souls...it didn't really matter which version you heard. They were all terrifying possibilities.

Possibilities, apparently, which were based on truth.

Lori hoped silently with a grim face that there wasn't any truth to the part of the stories where the psychopath gained some of their victim's magic. As a ghost, she had found out, Blooky was immune to physical attacks.

If this guy had magic, howeverâ€¦|

She pulled out her phone and dialed 911, hiding behind the wall as much as she could. She knew that, thankfully, the recording system hadn't been turned on yet, so she felt confident enough about hazarding a call out of view.

"Nine-One-One, what is your emergency?"

"There's a guy here, threatening my friend with a knife. I'm at 97 East Lorry. Please send help."

She heard a muffled collision on the other side of the door, and gasped as Blooky, injured, came crawling through the wall meekly. She threw her phone down and scrambled to get to him, eyes watering as she assessed the damage.

He looked at her through watery eyes and pulled out his soul, and she gasped as its dim light flickered, and a small crack in the top began to spread.

"H-he can-can't have this. Keep it safe."

Lori paused briefly in her panic, confused at the words her friend spoke. She opened her mouth to ask him what he meant, but he acted before she got the chance. Her mouth contorted into a silent scream, pain ripping through her entire being as her dearest friend shoved his soul inside her chest while his form faltered. Lori dropped from her kneeling position to support herself with her hands, weak as her arms were due to the pain, looking up to see her friend mouth a silent 'good-bye' as he turned to dust.

Tears streamed down her face and she choked on her breath as slamming on her door snapped her back to reality. The dense metal door was apparently holding their attacker at bay somewhat, but from the looks of things, he just about had the door off of its hinges. She winced, fighting the pain to stand and fight.

'_Blookyâ€¦|'_

Another hit and the door gave way. Her attacker was slow to enter the room, and Lori took what she saw as her opportunity, and sent her knuckles full force into his throat. He staggered and dropped the knife, gasping meekly for air as she shoved past him, running for the door. She didn't look back as she ran out the door into the rain, barefoot and thoroughly disheveled. She got across the street and

explained the situation, sighing with relief as the police arrived, as well as an ambulance.

The officers went in, guns ready, and several walked back out and got on their radios, the paramedics running in to take their place. She walked outside and greeted the officers, explained the situation and her part in it, and asked if she could put her shoes on.

She frowned as one of the paramedics came out and whispered something in the officer's ear. He sighed and looked at her. "Unfortunately, no. We've got a bit of a problem."

She paused and fidgeted. "What seems to be the problem, Officer?"

"The paramedics confirmed that that was indeed monster dust, so this place was a crime scene to begin with. Butâ€¦"

"Butâ€¦?"

He sighed. "If what you said happened actually happened...then you just killed someone."

Her jaw dropped in shock as he gathered her hands behind her and zip tied them in place, reciting her rights as tears streamed down her face before escorting her to the car.

Kinda funny, the various things that can jeopardize your whole way of life. Like five minutes one Friday afternoon.

4. Dead Inside

****DISCLAIMER: I DO NOT OWN UNDERTALE! Carry on. ****

****So I'm doing my best to catch everything before chapters go live, but let's just say that the autocorrect on my iPad works just about as well as a roomba running through dog shit in your otherwise clean kitchen while forgetting about your living room rug full of dog hairs(or residue?) and toddler grit; it makes a mess where there wasn't one before and doesn't clean up the messes it needs to. If you catch something I missed, feel free to give me a shout in PM or in a review, aye?***

****R&R if ya like, and thanks for reading!****

CHAPTER THREE

Lori rubbed her wrists and sighed. She still wasn't sure of what all was going on. What the hell had Blooky done? How had that guy _actually hurt him, _and even more importantly, badly enough toâ€¦|

No. She couldn't think about that now. She was barely holding herself together, and she needed to get her shit together and get herself out of dodge, since jail didn't exactly sound like fun to her. There would be time later. There had to be.

She looked up as one of the officers that she had been dealing with for the past hour or so came back into the interrogation room they

had sequestered her in. He had a bottle of water with him, the saint.
"Thanks, Officer Snead."

"Yep."

She took a small drink before fidgeting slightly with the bottle.
"So, um...I know I'm supposed to get a call to a lawyer and a personal call...any idea when I'll get to make those?"

He nodded. "Let me go get a phone."

She smiled weakly at him as he walked out. "Thanks."

She glanced at the clock mounted on the wall. '_An hour and a half already? Jeez.'_

Officer Snead came back with a cordless phone and handed it to her. She placed a quick call to the family lawyer and told him that she would explain once he got to the station, ended the call, and then froze.

She didn't have her phone with her. She didn't have her contacts list with her.

She couldn't remember anyone's phone numbers. Other than the one that couldn't really help her.

She sighed and slowly plucked out the numbers, holding the phone to her ear and praying for an answer. She was surprised, but there was one.

"Kiddo? Can ya hear me ok? One cough for yes, two for no."

One cough. Thank the gods.

"Your mom or Asgore around?"

Two coughs.

"Sans?"

Two coughs.

She was growing desperate. "Papyrus?"

Two coughs.

"Anyone?"

Two coughs again. Fuck.

"Ok. Listen close, ok? This is super duper incredibly important. Alright?"

One cough. Bless this child.

"I'm at the police station. I need you to text your mom, or Asgore, or Sans, or Paps, or _somebody,_ anyone that you can get in touch with. I need someone to come to the station, and if you can convince them to, I need them to bring me a clean set of clothes and a

different pair of shoes. Anything is fine. I just need to get out of these clothes, and I'm hopefully going to need a ride back to my place soon. Think you can do that, Bud?"

One cough.

"Thanks, Frisk. I'm counting on you."

The line went dead, and Lori handed the phone back to Officer Snead. He glanced at her. "You said 'Frisk', right? Like Frisk Dreemurr, the monster ambassador?"

Lori nodded. "Yeah...why?"

"Ain't that kid mute?"

Lori laughed dryly, her laugh sounding more like a strangled barking. "Yeah. Frisk's number is the only one I have memorized. My phone was refusing to update, and so, for like a week, it kept eating Frisk's contact info when I first got their number. That's the only reason I know it. Everyone else's number is stuck in the evidence lock-up, I assume. Probably next to my shoes."

Snead glanced under the table, and Lori wiggled her toes for effect. He shook his head and looked her in the eyes again, head still shaking. "I could have gone and gotten a number out of your phone for you...you know that, right?"

Lori pursed her lips in surprise. "I...did not. Why else would I have just said 'screw it', and gone ahead and made a phone call to someone who literally can't talk right now. Or ever, for that matter."

He laughed. "Well, hopefully you won't need to know in the future, but now you do, just in case."

Lori stared blankly at him. "Well, you're not wrong."

0-0-0-0-0

Frisk had texted everyone, and got no immediate responses. In a panicked hurry, they bolted out their front door barefoot, and ran up the three flights of stairs to get to Sans and Papyrus' apartment. They beat on the front door with their tiny fists, hoping that maybe, perhaps, Sans was just asleep on the couch, like always.

They gasped silently in relief as they heard shuffled footsteps on the other side of the door after several moments. The deadbolt scraped open and the door creakily followed it, and Frisk burst through the entryway at a dead run, searching the couch for Sans' phone.

"eh? what you lookin' for, kiddo?"

*Phone.

Sans held up his phone, and Frisk hastily turned his hand so that the screen faced him. Looking down at the kid in front of him without moving his phone, Sans got the answer he had needed without asking. Frisk was hastily and repeatedly signing the word for

'message'.

Sans opened the message he had, raising a brow bone in confusion as he saw who it was from. As he read it, his mouth opened slightly, starting to pick up on just why the kid was so freaked out. He slipped his phone in his pocket and turned to frisk as he slipped on his sneakers.

"you know the drill, kid. back home. lock the door behind you, deadbolt too. text your mom to let her know that the deadbolt is locked."

Frisk nodded and headed out the front door just in front of Sans, who ruffled their hair as they passed. "good job on comin' to get me. things are gonna be ok."

Frisk headed down the stairs to do as they were told, and Sans sighed, feeling for a weak spot in reality to take a shortcut to Lorilai's. He found one, and slipped through, finding himself in her living room. '_heh. least it wasn't the pool.'_

He busied himself with gathering what Frisk had mentioned, keeping an analytical brain, finding a pair of yoga pants, socks, a sports bra, and a tee shirt. He grabbed a pair of running shoes from the rack by the door, stuck it all in a grocery bag, and slipped back to the parking lot of his apartment, and wandered over to his bike. He opened up one of the saddle bags and put the grocery bag inside before snapping the lid shut. He straddled the machine, put away the kick stand, and started to make his way to the station.

0-0-0-0-0

Lori nodded bleakly to her longtime family-friend and lawyer, holding her head in her hands as she grunted out her responses.

A knock on the door brought her back to her senses, and she looked up just in time to see the door open and reveal her worried-looking friend.

She gasped in relief and jolted out of her seat before stopping herself, looking sheepishly at the uniformed man just behind her friend. "Would it be ok if I hugged my friend, Officer Snead?"

A brief nod had her rushing across the interrogation room to cling onto her friend, hugging him tightly, as if her very life depended on it. He froze at the sudden contact before lightly patting her on the back with his free hand. "brought the stuff you asked for."

She sniffled, and thanked him in the quietest voice he had ever heard her use. As quiet as it was, he could still hear the waver in her voice, that tremor that came when someone was on the edge of tears. "what happened?"

She stopped, and shoved him back to look him dead in his eye lights, all traces of mirth replaced by dire seriousness and pain. "Sans, Blooky...he...he got pushed down."

He dropped the bag of her things and stared her dead in the face, the lights leaving his eyes and the pitch of his voice dropping several

octaves as he gripped her arms roughly. "***why are you here then?***"

She winced and shied away reflexively, shrinking at his anger. "I...I accidentally killed the guy that attacked us. There's video proof of the entire encounter, I figure. He attacked us in our studio where we do our recordings for MTT's shows, and the landlord is a paranoid jerk, and installed and maintained a ridiculous amount of security cams for a space that small. I...I hadn't been meaning to, as good or bad as that might sound...I didn't think I had hit him that hard. I have basically no upper arm strength. You know me! I can barely even take the trash out if the bag gets too full!"

Sans sighed and pulled her into a hug. "It's ok, kiddo. From what I understand about human law, if there's video that it really was in self-defense, then you're fine."

He looked her over, and smiled reassuringly at her, his eye lights back where they belonged. Her lower lip was quivering. Given everything, and how emotional he knew she was, given her nature, he was surprised that she was still holding herself together.

The officer behind them cleared his throat. "Mr. Aster, if you'd like to follow me to the waiting room? Miss Eidolon, the bathroom is just across the hall, if you'd like to get changed."

Sans shrugged and followed Snead, and Lori picked up the grocery bag and went to the bathroom to get changed. She locked the door behind her and stripped, leaving her dusty clothes in a pile in the corner before turning to the sink and washing the skin that had been exposed as best she could with water and hand soap. Drying off with paper towels, she turned to the bag Sans had brought, and blushed deeply when she noticed a sports bra that had been in her underwear drawer, thanking him silently, and hoping that he hadn't seen too much.

'_Comfy pants, warm socks, and...my favorite tee? I could kiss him.'_

She sighed and packed away her dirty clothes in the bag once her sneakers were on, unlocked the door and stepped outside and went back into the interrogation room, where her lawyer sat waiting.

"You're in luck, kid. The video came back, they showed it to a local judge, and they were apparently told that they don't want to see you in a courtroom over this. You're free to go home once you give a written statement corroborating what happened, which shouldn't be a problem, right?" He pushed forward a pad of paper and a pen.

She sighed and hastily scrawled down her story, signing it, dating it, and handing it back to her lawyer. "Thanks, Roy. You know where to send the bill. Am I clear to just...walk out of here or something?" He nodded. "Good. Later."

She walked out to the waiting room and found Sans. He blinked at her, not expecting to see her so soon. "you ready?"

"Nah, I need to get-oh, thanks." She took her phone and shoes from the officer that had tapped her on the shoulder. "I'm good. Mind taking me home?"

He shrugged. "sure thing, kiddo."

She followed him out of the building to the parking lot, becoming more numb with every step. He got her bag into the saddlebag, got on, made sure she was situated, and she let him. She was safe now. Sans had her, he wouldn't let anything happen. She could shut down now.

So she did.

He rode through town slowly, taking note of her uncharacteristic silence without her nose in a book. "how you holding up?"

No response. He wasn't surprised.

He stopped at a red light and glanced back. The helmet was still a little askew from where he had had to put it on her, and her grip on him was loose as she stared miles away, ignoring the world, her lips downturned in an emotionless, pouty null. If he was being blunt, she looked like shit. He sighed, turning to watch the light, and moving forward again as it turned green.

He made his way to her place halfway slowly, taking care to make sure that she was stable and safe, given her loose, barely existent grip. The last thing she needed right now was to take a spill off his bike, given everything that had happened today.

The last rays of sunlight peeked out over the ridges of the mountains surrounding their little town, and he shook his head. What he wouldn't give to have this scenario a little different. Riding on the back roads at sunset, sure, with a beautiful girl on his bike, even better. But not a traumatized woman, looking very weak, very young, very insecure. Very broken. Not with someone he knew dead, and his passenger coming to grips not only with the fact that her best friend was dead, but with the he fact that she had been coated with him for who knows how long, and that she was now, herself, a murderer, in a fashion.

In different circumstances, he'd be enjoying himself. But not now.

He knew that in this state, he'd likely have to take care of the person he had so often seen taking care of Frisk, taking care of his brother, and taking care of everyone around her before she took care of herself. He wasn't sure that she'd even be capable of getting off his bike without assistance right now.

He pulled in her long drive, and slowly avoided a slight pothole that was beginning to form in the gravel driveway. "gonna need to get that filled in, kid."

No response. He'd probably come out later and rearrange the disheveled gravel to fill the mud puddle back in.

He pulled to a stop in front of her garage, lowered his kickstand, and stepped off his bike, assessing the situation. He shook his head, helping her off the bike, taking off the helmet, and guiding her to the back gate. She took small, shuffling steps, and he nodded as she made progress towards the house that he deemed acceptable, a hand on

her back and one on her arm to keep her stable.

He paused for a moment and unlocked the gate to her house, remembering the passcode on the lock thanks to the clue of "don't forget" scratched very distinctively into the wooden gate-a memorable reference to FullMetal Alchemist. She had convinced him to watch initially just to get her to shut up, but by the third episode, he had been hooked, and his spree was now out of her control.

He guided her through the open gate and across the yard to the patio. Another door to open. Another door to guide her through. He sighed as he closed and locked the sliding door behind them. At least she was in the house now.

He looked her over. She still had some runny eyeliner on her face, and there was what looked to be some dust in her hair. "lori?"

Her eyes refocuse slightly. "lore?"

She looked around slightly, and her voice came out as more of a croak than anything. "H-home?"

He nodded. "think you can shower?" She nodded slowly. "i'll let you get to that, then. i'll go ahead and make you some tea."

She shuffled towards her bathroom and he slipped off his wet sneakers before making his way into the kitchen. He had a feeling that he was going to be here a while. Putting the kettle on to boil, he pulled out his phone and texted Papyrus.

[gonna be here a while, bro. stay with tori tonight.]

[paps: IS THE HUMAN QUITE ALRIGHT? NO ONE HAS GOTTEN A RESPONSE FROM HER PHONE YET AND WE ARE ALL RATHER WORRIED.]

[napstablook got pushed down earlier. lori killed the guy that attacked them on accident. was video of the whole thing on security cams. she looks uninjured, at any rate.]

[i'll call you later when she's doing better.]

He flicked his phone onto silent and slipped it in his pocket, pulling the kettle off the fire and finishing the tea. Her favorite tea, in her favorite mug. He left it on the counter and went to check on her, hearing the water shut off with a squeak. He nodded, returning to the kitchen to poke around in her fridge, finding six 'drinking bottles' of ketchup in the door of the fridge.

'_hadn't i cleaned out her stock of ketchup for me last time i was here?'_

He shrugged and grabbed a bottle, closing the door and twisting off the cap before taking a swig. Shuffling footsteps alerted him to Lori's arrival, and he turned to see her shuffling towards the kitchen in an oversized tee. He pointed towards the living room, shaking his head and grabbing her mug of tea with his free hand.

He moved to the living room fairly quickly, setting down his ketchup to wrap her hands around the bright orange mug. Her expression was still fairly blank, but she was at least somewhat conscious. He

grabbed one of the blankets off the couch and wrapped it around her shoulders, and draped the other over her lap, tucking her in gently. He sat down in the recliner she generally took, not wanting to disturb her on the love seat, and watched her as he slowly sipped on his drink.

"how you holding up?"

She slowly looked his way, but gave no response. He nodded. "that well, huh?"

She looked down at her drink slowly and took a sip. "Yeah."

He nodded. "you get hurt in the fight?"

"Physically?"

He shrugged. "sure. physically. i can already tell that you aren't holding up well emotionally, but there ain't much i can do 'bout that one."

"Then no. I'm uninjured."

He shook his head at her cold, almost robotic tone. "damn, kid."

"I'm not a kid."

He looked over at her questioningly.

"I was born in 199X. I'm not a kid."

He blinked. "i guess not. what would you like me to call you then?"

She paused, the wheels in her head turning almost visibly as she stared into her tea. Looking up, she deadpanned, and her answer was flat. "Not kid."

He laughed. "alright then, lorilai. you think on that and give me your answer when you're ready."

She took another drink of her tea. He looked her over for what felt like the millionth time. "what was it you said to tori once? 'the bags under your eyes could carry groceries'?" She blinked. "when you're done with your tea, I should get you in bed, or paps n tori will have my head."

She frowned noticeably compared to the downturned pouty null that her lips had pretty much been frozen in since he got her out of the precinct. "yeah?"

"Will you stay?"

He blinked. "Like...in your room with you?"

She looked down. "I don't want to be alone, right now." Her voice cracked as she held back tears. He nodded.

"ok. i'll stay."

0-0-0-0-0

Sans groaned as the first of the rays of light stabbed at his vision, but even worse was the obnoxious, near constant ring of the doorbell chime. Slipping out of Lori's bed carefully to avoid waking her, he grumbled as he stalked through the hall and up the stairs to get the door.

"d'you know what fuckin' _hour_ it is? the hell do you _want?"_

"It happens to be ten o'seven in the morning, Sans Seraf Aster, and I will thank you not to take that tone with me. I'll forgive you, in light of recent events, but _really_, Sans." Toriel admonished, snapping Sans straight out of his groggy agitation. "Where is Lorilai?"

"asleep, last i knew. in her bed."

Toriel nodded. "Good. I've brought groceries and a few other things. Help me carry things inside."

Sans shrugged and did as he was told, letting the motherly goat-woman take charge. He certainly wasn't about to stand in her way.

0-0-0-0-0

She hadn't eaten in three days, and had barely left her bed. She barely drank, but took the tea Sans would bring her without comment. He would sit with her, slipping away to eat and such while she slept, making sure that he was back before she woke up.

He kept the others there informed about her status, trying to keep the horde off of her for as long as possible.

Napstablook's death had affected everyone differently. Everyone was showing signs of wear, but the two that were handling things the worst were Lorilai and Mettaton. While Lorilai was in complete emotional lockdown, none in and none out, Mettaton was feeling every emotion he possibly could about the situation, seemingly going through all five stages of grief at once.

"ARE YOU CERTAIN THE HUMAN DOES NOT NEED TO EAT?"

"'m tellin' ya paps, I looked it up. they're surprisingly sturdy, but if she doesn't eat soonish, we gotta force her or take her to the hospital."

A light thump and the sound of a door sliding across carpet made the whole house fall silent. Light footsteps sounded up the hallway, and Sans jumped into action, sliding down the bannister to support her on her way up the stairs. Her legs as shaky as they were, she was grateful for the help.

As they crested the stairs, she assessed the state of the main floor of her house. It was full to bursting with members of the monster community. She locked eyes with only one, though, and made a beeline, unsupported, to hug him. Her voice sounded scratchy, almost foreign to her as she apologized to Mettaton as he sobbed into her shoulder.

Try as she might, she couldn't hold the tears off any longer. Her emotional dam shattered, and the cascade of tears behind it followed.

She heard stifled gasps from a few others in the room, and heard their whispers, but ignored them. Until, that is, Sans said her name.

"look at me, lori. i need to see your tears."

She blinked and stared at him, her eyes watering as she sniffled. "Y-yeah?"

His eyes went wide with shock, and he swore, pulling her soul out of her chest. She wheezed slightly at the sudden pull, but recovered quickly.

"What the fuck, Sans?" She glared.

He held up a hand, staring at her soul. "'what the fuck' is right." He pointed at her soul. "care to explain?"

She looked down at her soul, only now realizing the room had gone quiet in shock. When she saw her soul, she understood why. Her jaw dropped as she stared at the small heart floating in front of her.

Vivid green, glowing softly like something out of the land of OZ stood before her, but only on half.

The other half, distinctly different, shone a deep, royal blue. In the middle, the two mixed and intermingled lightly, creating an odd teal seam. Her mouth moved as though to speak, but it couldn't find the words to say.

Sans cleared his throat. "well? care to explain the silver in your soul?"

She looked at him oddly, her brows knitted in confusion. "What?"

"you heard me."

"There's no silver there, Sans. Only blue. Dark blue."

He stopped, clearly confused. "what?"

"I'm telling you, Sans," she reiterated, "there's no silver there. There's green," she pointed to one half, "and dark blue," she stated, pointing again.

Undyne shook her head. "No, nerd, there ain't. It's green and white."

Lori stared at Undyne. "I know my colors, damnit."

Sans held out a hand and grabbed in Undyne's general direction, pulling her soul from her chest. "what color?"

Lori rolled her eyes. "Yellow."

Sans repeated the process with Alphys, again met with protest by the soul's owner. "again."

"Dark blue"

"again"

"Orange"

"**again.**"

Lori teared up at his tone and began crying again. "Green, Jesus Christ, Sans, do you really think I'm _lying _to you?"

"That is enough, Sans."

He turned. "toriâ€¦"

She glared. "No, Sans. At this point, it is clear she can now see something that we cannot. My child, how did your soul become so...divided?"

Lori sniffled, rubbing at her eyes with her hands As she blubbered out her answer. "Wh-wh-when B-B-Blooky...g-g-got hurt...h-h-he managed t-to get through th-th-the w-wall...and h-he t-t-t-told m-me th-that th-the a-a-assh-hole th-that k-k-k-killed h-him c-c-couldn't g-get h-his s-s-s-soul...a-a-and th-then he sh-sh-shoved i-it i-in m-m-my ch-che-he-hest."

The collective gasp did nothing to put her at ease, nor did Alphys' mentioning of 'tests'. Toriel quickly wrapped her in a mother's warm embrace, and carried her over to the couch where she began to cuddle Lori and stroke her hair as she cried, attempting to soothe her no differently than she would soothe any other child.

Eventually, the tears stopped, and Toriel began to speak softly, still holding Lori tight and petting her hair. "My child...as far as I can tell, when your friend gave you his soul right before death, he somehow managed to fuse it with your own. In an attempt to keep his soul from someone that was evidently one of the ones going around and stealing monster magic for their own gain, he gave you a gift that only the closest of monsters receive; the gift of another's magic."

Toriel sighed. "Normally, it is given freely and accepted willingly, but only part of our magic is given, not our whole soul. I am sure, however, that he was doing what he felt was right. Just as I am certain that he did not do this in any way to hurt you."

Lori looked up at the motherly monster tearily, her tears giving off a faint blue glow in the dimmed lighting of the room. "What's going to happen to me now?"

Toriel frowned. "I cannot say for certain, my child. But I do know that in the immediate future...I am going to go make us some lunch. How does that sound?"

Lori nodded softly. "But in the long term?"

Toriel hesitated. "I suppose you have now become the newest official member of our community. We will have to keep an eye on you for your health, since I'm not really sure that we know what will happen to you because of the fusion, but you will have the support of the community in adjusting."

Sans stood off in a corner, watching the exchange warily. He wasn't sure how things were going to go now, but he knew, more than anything, that if shit went sideways, he would be ready to make sure that Lorilai Eidolon would have one hell of a ****bad time.** ******

5. Family Ties

****DISCLAIMER:** Don't own Undertale. I also am making no efforts to conceal product names, and this isn't endorsed by a darn thing. So there. ******

Chapter FOUR

Frisk rolled their eyes as they got out of their mother's car. Lori had the amp cranked again, and probably hadn't been able to hear her phone for the past few hours, which is why Toriel and Frisk had even had to volunteer to come check on her to begin with.

It was now October 13th, and Lori was adjusting as well as could be expected after only a month. Which, as it turned out, included trying to destroy her eardrums on a regular basis as she turned to 90s punk rock melodies on a guitar while singing as loudly as she possibly could to get some kind of musically-triggered catharsis to help beat back the intense vortex of depression that threatened to drag her down into its undefined depths.

If Frisk wasn't mistaken, today was an Eve 6 kind of day, and prepared for the sound to be much, much louder once they got the door open. Lori had decided that her closest friends would be allowed to have keys to get into her house in the event that they needed to check on her for some reason, though the unspoken invitation to just come over whenever had been plain. A key for Toriel, a key each for Sans and Papyrus, a key for Alphys and Undyne to share, and a key for Mettaton provided that he swore to not try to renovate or redecorate without her explicit permission.

Pulling out their key, Frisk worked on unlocking the lock, scrabbling a bit because of their height and inability to fully see the lock. Toriel walked up behind them, a few grocery bags in hand, and giggled softly. "Are you quite alright, my child?"

The music coming from inside stopped suddenly, and after a few moments, the door opened. "Tori? Frisk? Whatcha doin' here?"

Toriel blinked in shock for a brief moment before shrugging off her surprise. "No one had heard from you in several hours, and it is not like you to leave messages unanswered. Frisk and I volunteered to come check on you. I have brought the ingredients to make pie."

Lori smiled and scratched the back of her head sheepishly. "Sorry. Music was kinda loud and I didn't feel the vibrations of my phone. Heard something scraping on the lock, though, so I thought I'd come check it out. Sorry about that. Still learning my new limits. Kinda

weird all the things I can hear now. Kinda explains how Blook did some of the things with music that he managed to do."

*It's ok.

"Yeah, I'll get the hang of things eventually. C'mon in." Lori took part of the bags from Toriel and opened the door further before heading up the stairs and dropping the bags off in the kitchen.

Toriel and Frisk followed, Tori busying herself about making the pie and Frisk following Lori into the living room staring wide eyed at the guitar on the love seat. Lori picked it up and began to put it away, stopping as Frisk pulled on her shorts. "Yeah, kiddo?"

Frisk rolled their eyes and smiled.

*You sound like Uncle Sans. Do you think you could teach me?

Lori paused as she slowly translated in her head, slowly grunting in surprise when she figured out the full sentence. "I guess I kinda do, and you want to learn guitar?"

Frisk nodded, and Lori shrugged. "Piano might be a bit easier to learn at first, just so you get a good idea of the notes and whatnot. Frisk shrugged.

*Do you have a piano then?

Lori scoffed, smiling at the small child near her before finishing putting away the guitar in the stand by the amp. "Of course I do. C'mon."

Lori guided Frisk down the stairs and opened the door at the end of the hall that was still unknown to Frisk. Aside from the piano and several other instruments, there was a fireplace, two couches and several recliners, a computer, an extra-wide-screened television, surround sound system, and several gaming consoles. "Welcome to the den, Frisk. I don't care if you come in here alone, so long as you're careful. And if you want to play a game, ask your mother first. Not all of the games I have down here are kid-friendly." They nodded.

Lori opened up the cover on the piano and sat down, patting the space on the bench beside her. Frisk slid on to the seat and watched in awe as Lori began expertly plucking out a tune on the ivory keys, moving slowly at first, before letting her fingers dance rapidly across the keys. She came to a sudden stop, taking Frisk's hands in her own, helping Frisk play the slower intro to try to get them accustomed to the feel.

Lori didn't notice the short figure watching her in the doorway, happily absorbed in spending time with the child.

0-0-0-0-0

"Well, darling, when you think about it, since you have his magic now, that means that we're cousins. Isn't it _exciting?_"

Lori sighed and pointed at Mettaton with her fork. "I'm not really

sure the transient property applies to familial relations like this, Haps."

The flamboyant robot pouted at her. "Are you certain, darling?"

Lori sighed. "I suppose given everything that I've learned about monster physiology and such in recent months that it could be possible. If you would really prefer to consider me to be your family, then I guess I could roll with it."

Mettaton squealed girlishly and hugged her, squeezing the air out of her and making her drop her fork. Lori batted at his arm, unable to get enough breath to tell MTT that he was crushing her. He caught the hint and let her go, blushing as she inhaled sharply. "Sorry about that."

She waved him off and picked up her fork, setting it on the table. "It's fine."

He smiled at her, resting his head on his hand. "So. When are you performing at my show next?"

Lori frowned. "I don't really think I should on my own. It...it'll feel wrong."

"Darling, I insist. The best way to get over tragedies like this is to accept them and move on."

Lori sighed. "I'll think about it. Thanks for lunch, honey. Gonna head to the grocery store, then probably head home." She got up and waved as she walked off of the patio at Muffet's, heading to the parking lot not too far away.

As she got in her car and turned the key, both the engine and her sound system roared to life. Some 80s glam metal blared out the speakers, and Lori dropped her sun visor, pulling the car into reverse and out of the parking lot.

The drive to the grocery store was fairly short and uneventful, and she was thankful for the break. Her 'cousin' was certainly something else, but was actually a fairly decent, fun, tolerable person. But he was also exhausting, and wore her down to the point that she would need a nap after a few hours with him.

She found herself a parking spot that was both halfway far from the door under a security camera, and pulled in, rolling up her windows and putting up her sun visor before shutting off the engine. She grabbed her phone, keys and patted her pocket to make sure she still had her wallet before exiting her car and locking the doors.

Looking towards the asphalt due to the brightness of the sun, which had been bothering her eyes more and more of late, she began walking towards the store, stopping as she noticed a strange, amorphous black slime. Following the slime upward with her eyes, she found herself staring in horror at the figure before her, his cracked ivory face and open, slack, chilling smile chilling her to her core.

***YOU...NEED...HELP.**

She took a step back, preparing to dart off, despite the heels that she had worn out to avoid a scolding from Mettaton. "I need help?"

***ME...G-A-S-T-E-R. NEED...HELP. **

Still tense, she nodded. "You need help, then? G...Gaster, is it?"

A nod. She swallowed hard. "What do you need help with?"

"HEY PUNK!"

Lori whipped her head in the direction of the familiar voice, seeing Undyne, and turned back to face Gaster, only to see no one. Her jaw dropped, and she rubbed her eyes. We're the damn things playing tricks on her now too? She turned back and smiled at Undyne. "'Sup, Undyne?"

"Oh, nothing much. Alphys sent me out to get groceries. Didn't even yell at any of the other drivers on the way over here. FUHUHUHU! Pretty great, right?"

Lori held up her hand, Undyne slapping it forcefully. "So what's with the heels_, girly-girl_?"

Lori rolled her eyes. "Nice digs are cuz of lunch with Metta. Didn't feel like getting bitched at. You wanna go ahead and shop with me?"

The two shrugged and headed towards the store together, and went about their shopping.

0-0-0-0-0

"No, I did_ not _just buy junk food. It was _not_ just popato chisps. No, Tori, I bought real food too. Yes, I mean monster food. That's real food. Yes, as opposed to junk food."

She put away several bags of popato chisps, all in different flavors. And two different pints of nice cream.

"No, I know that I can just add Temmie Flakes to a human recipe to make it monster food. I've been doing that for a while for when you guys come over." She shifted the phone to her other ear and put a few more groceries away. "Yes, _Mom_, I know that I need to eat magical food for at least half of my diet. I figured that I'd just make a full conversion for the most part. No, that was only half-sarcastic. Yeeees, I knooooooow. Sorry. Yes, ma'am."

She grabbed a few more things to put away, slipping them onto shelves. "Uh huh. Will do. Ok, I'm gonna finish putting this stuff away, I'll call you if I need anything. Ok. Bye-bye!"

Lori sighed and finished putting away her groceries, shoving the plastic bags into the bag she had for plastic bags. She paused, looking around her kitchen for a few moments before grabbing a monster soda and a bag of chisps, taking them with her to the couch where she flopped, sitting upside down and cross-legged. She popped a chisp in her mouth and groped aimlessly for the remote, finding it and turning the television on, finding an episode of a show she

followed.

"ain't that a rerun?"

Lori jumped, nearly spilling her drink and succeeding in spilling her chisps in the process. "Damnit, Sans. Do I have to put a bell on you?"

"nope."

She sighed. "'Suh, dude?"

"hiding from paps. he's wanting me to clean."

She laughed. "Ooooooh,_ scary. _Wouldn't want to have to that, now would we. Eh, whatever, man. Cop a squat. Might be a rerun, but it's still good."

She resumed her position, and stretched her arm out to offer Sans some chisps, which he silently declined. She shrugged, and ate another.

"so how you handling things?"

She winced. Course it wasn't just hiding from Paps.

"Good, I guess?"

"mind if i go ahead and look at your soul then?"

She sighed and shrugged. "Whatever. If you really have to."

He pulled her soul and nodded. The seam was widening slightly, and it made him nervous. '_it's still fusing?''_

Lori paused, not wanting to say anything, but eventually, curiosity and the desire to ensure she was still healthy won out. "You seem nervous."

He scoffed. "you're something new, something we don't really have any experience with. the last time something like you happened, the prince died."

Lori nodded. "Yeah...i spoke with Asriel and Frisk about that. They told me about..._her. _And everything that _she_ did. Are you sure that that wasn't just because her determination was far stronger than Asriel's, and that she was a bad egg to begin with?"

Sans paused. "we can't say that for certain. you do make a valid point, however. if that is actually the case, it would explain why you maintained control, and why you haven't-"

"Gone on a psychopathic murderous rampage?"

Sans glared at her, his eye lights fading. "it isn't funny."

"At least you still give enough of a shit to hate me and suspect me like this."

He paused. "they...they told you about that too?"

Lori snorted. "Asriel was very adamant that I keep an eye out for 'that smiley trashbag', because you'd likely try to dust me...or whatever the hell I'll do at this point. Probably still rot, since I'm still pretty corporeal."

Sans sighed. "i just don't want a repeat of...of past events."

Lori nodded. "I understand. And if I do snap...thanks in advance for putting me down. Ok? I doubt I'd thank you if I needed put down, soâ€¦"

He nodded.

She frowned. "Anyway...you mind putting that back?"

He sent her soul back into her body, and she nodded in thanks.

She couldn't help but feel like Sans only put up with her existence because her brother considered her a friend. He never really gave her any evidence to the contrary, and she knew that he had been keeping a wary eye on her since she had met him, and it had only gotten worse in the past month.

"question."

She looked over and grunted softly. "why do you sound different than the other humans around here?"

She blinked. "You seriously don't know? Didn't you have regional accents in the Underground?"

"nope."

'_Just how fuckin' small was the Underground anyway?_'

"Well, I grew up on the other half of the country, down south. Moved here to live with my papaw when I was about 10. My mom died when I was real little, and my dad wasn't really the best suited to raising a lil kid, so he gave me to my mom's dad.

"When my papaw died several years ago, my dad came out here and moved in with me, since I now had a house of my own, and he was renting, and I needed a guardian because I was under 18. My dad met some chick here locally, and she didn't like me, and the feeling was mutual. She kept trying to convince my dad to 'just get rid of' me, and so he tried to kick me out of my own house on my 18th birthday. I called the lawyer that you saw with me in the interrogation room last month, n he said that, according to the will of Eoghan Niall Eidolon, the house was mine, and that that rat bastard had no bloody right to it. So he and his skank girlfriend moved out because I wasn't willing to let her be on the property and told dad that if he kept it up that I'd charge his lazy ass rent. They went across the country again, so they could mooch off of his dad."

Sans grunted. "why's your dad like that?"

Lori shrugged. "Because he's scum. Why? What's your dad like?"

She watched as he shifted uncomfortably. "I don't...I don't want to

talk about it."

She nodded. "Fair enough."

He stared blankly at the television, clearly done with talking in general. Lori sighed and turned her attention back to the show as well, not paying any mind as Sans fidgeted with something in the pocket of his hoodie. Little did she know that he was absentmindedly playing with the steel plate embedded into his right hand, trying to forget what he remembered of the past.

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"Focus, my child."

Lori's brow furrowed over intently closed eyes as she searched herself, trying to find what Toriel had only been able to describe as 'a warmth'. Lori wasn't sure that she would be able to handle monster magic consciously, but it was clear that she did have at least some of Blooky's magic, her eyes having shifted from amber to iridescent blue, while her tears, and occasionally other bodily fluids, came with a glowing blue sheen. This morning, she had woken up to glowing blue drool on her pillow and the left half of her face. The magic had taken some time to evaporate, but she could at least say that her pillow was no longer glowing.

When Toriel had accidentally cut herself while chopping broccoli, the goat woman had suggested trying to heal her with magic, given the lack of severity.

Lori growled softly in frustration. "I'm sorry, Tori, I just can't find what you're describing."

She nodded in understanding. "It's quite alright, my child. You're still learning, and you'll find it eventually."

Lori sighed and looked at the woman across from her sadly. "Sorry I couldn't help. Want me to go get a...never mind. If it hurts with the little bit of hair I have, it would be hell for you. Sorry."

Tori chuckled and took a bite out of one of the cinnamon bunnies that Lori had bought about an hour earlier. "It's quite alright, dear. See? No damage." She held up her paw for inspection.

"Well, there's that at least. Back to Thanksgiving prep?"

Toriel nodded. "I am glad that you offered your home for this celebration. We certainly would not all fit in any of our other homes, as many of us as there are."

Lori laughed. "It's ok. I'm a sucker for any holiday that lets me gorge myself until I pass out from a food coma."

Toriel's eyes widened a bit. "You are certain that putting yourself into such a severe medical condition is wise?"

Lori snorted as she busted out laughing. "It's a turn of phrase. It just means that you're so full that you fall asleep. It has to do with the way human digestion systems work. I used to crawl under the dinner table to sleep when I was little." She paused. "Course, I also

used to smack my lil cousins and the dogs in the head with my turkey legs when they would come sniffing at my plate. So...there's that. Can't trust a five year old to not pull stunts like that."

Toriel laughed and nodded. "That I can understand. Frisk can be absolutely rotten."

"Yeah, but Frisk is absolutely adorable."

"This is true." Toriel walked back into the kitchen, and Lori followed, pulling out her phone and docking it in her iHome.

"Any requests?" Toriel shrugged and Lori shrugged in response, putting on her Mystery Skulls station on Pandora. A catchy electro-funk tune came up, and the two went about their preparations.

The house already smelled wonderful, Toriel making sure to make her special cinnamon-butterscotch pie, and Lori making sure to keep her cheesecakes and her pumpkin chiffon pie perfect, as always. The younger woman readily admitted that she was a perfectionist, but that it was also beneficial in some instances, like with anything she cooked, because thanks to her laziness, she made damn sure that when she cooked something, she cooked it right the first time.

A brief knock on the door announced someone's arrival, and they opened the door moments later, and announced themselves verbally.

"WOWWIE, HUMAN, YOUR HOME SMELLS DELICIOUS!"

"yeah, i have to agree with paps. what is that?"

Lori walked out of the kitchen and dusted the flour off her hands onto her apron. "Well, there's five kinds of pie, three cheesecakes, mashed potatoes, ham, turkey, cranberry salad, stuffing, gravy with and without giblets, green beans, asparagus, broccoli salad, and a few other things. So I'd have to say that 'thanksgiving dinner' is probably your best bet."

They nodded and sat at the dining room table across from the entrance to the kitchen. "WE HAVE BROUGHT THE SPAGHETTI."

The stomping of small feet up the stairs caught their attention, and Lori frowned at the glare on Frisk's face. "'samatta, grumpy-gus?"

*After an hour, the cake was a lie.

Lori fought back a laugh. "I'm sorry, sweetie. Want to play a different game? Or are you done right now?"

Frisk crossed their arms and glared towards the living room, signing with a single hand.

*So done. What's on TV?

"Uh...probably the parade, maybe some other crap...nobody shows anything good on Thanksgiving really. We could pick out a DVD or blu-ray, or maybe there's something on Netflix?"

Frisk shrugged and stalked off towards the couch. "Tori, you have everything under control for a few?"

Toriel waved her hand dismissively. "We're almost done here anyway, Lorilai dear, go ahead and take your apron off. You've done more than enough already."

Lori smiled softly and gave a half-shrug before slipping off her apron, tossing it in a nearby laundry basket. "Aight. Cool beans."

She joined Frisk in the living room, the two skeletons following and finding their usual seats. "By the way, Sans, I picked up a butt-ton of ketchup for you. Thought you might enjoy that."

He looked towards her with his perpetual, lazy grin plastered on his face. "ya know, y-is that an ouroboros?"

Lori busted out laughing. "I am genuinely shocked that you haven't noticed my tattoo till just now. Shall I assume that the others have gone unnoticed as well?"

He shrugged. "maybe. how bout you show 'em off, just in case."

Lori rolled her eyes as she stood up, pointing to each piece in turn. "Right. So there's my sloth ouroboros, my elder scrolls dragon and daedric symbol, this conjoined sun and moon on my shoulder, the triforme, the fairytail guild mark here on my thigh, my elvish script here, my cherry blossoms and hummingbird moth here on my forearm, and I also have my full back piece, and something under my breasts. Serious, dude, how have you noticed none of them."

He blinked. "i really don't know."

She shook her head. "You just weren't paying attention. My ears are also pierced. So now you know." She turned her head to exhibit her multiple lobe and cartilage piercings, and her daith piercing in her right ear. He shrugged.

Papyrus raised a finger questioningly, speaking up softly. "But what is your back tattoo, human?"

Lori blushed and sighed before looking over at Frisk. "Cover your eyes, kid."

Frisk arched an eyebrow but did what they were told. Lori turned around and peeled off her tube top and tossed it on the couch before unhooking her bra and holding it out of the way. "See?"

Papyrus and Sans stared open-mouthed at the bold black ink detailing an hourglass that ended in fanged, anatomically correct, hyper-detailed skulls, the support beams formed by four hyper-realistic femurs, two on each side, fused at the ball and tied around the neck with twine. Bat wings, oriented upside down and again, done hyper realistically, stretched out from the joints, across her sides, forming the base for her under-breast tattoo, which wasn't visible from their angle.

"Are you two done ogling my favorite piece yet?"

After getting nothing but a faint squeak in response, she rolled her eyes and began to get dressed again.

"W-wowwie. What did that to you?"

Lori sat down, uncovering Frisk's eyes now that there was no chance that they'd see anything. Sans was still sitting in a stunned silence. "A, uh, tattoo artist?"

Papyrus didn't seem to understand. "How are these tattoos made, then?"

Lori blinked. "I guess it wouldn't be something you know, after all. Ok. So, you know human skin, right? Well, there's three layers to it. The top, which is made of dead cells and protects us and seals water in, the middle, where tattoo ink goes and where there are living cells that grow up and move towards the top layer as those cells flake off, and the bottom, where the cells are 'born', essentially, and where our skin sticks to the muscle and such underneath it. A tattoo artist will take a super fine, hollow needle, and inject ink into that middle layer to make a picture. And that's how tattoos are made, essentially."

Sans piped up, finally. "why doesn't the ink go away as the cells get replaced?"

Lori nodded. "When the ink is injected, it ultimately ends up between the cells, so the new cells just move around the ink for the most part."

"huh. cool."

The front door slammed open, and Undyne bellowed at the top of her lungs that she and Alphys had arrived, sprinting up the stairs and rounding the corner into the living room. "Mettaton is right behind us, by the way." Lori nodded and waved.

"What about Asgore? Anyone heard from him yet?"

Toriel popped out of the kitchen and dusted herself off. "He had texted me not too long ago to announce his departure from his apartment."

"Cool beans." Lori got up and went to the kitchen to check her phone. "I've got texts from Muffy and Grillbs saying that they're on their way too. Muff said she had Shyren with her, and the dogs should also be on their way as well. Once everyone else is here we can-"

"Lori darling, I'm he-ere!" She rolled her eyes at his sing-songs tone.

" 'Sup, cuz? What's..._Hapsta-nin'_?"

Several people groaned and she peered around the corner into the living room with a shit-eating grin that spread from ear to ear.

"REALLY, HUMAN, MUST YOU?"

She deadpanned. "Yes, Paps, I must."

Sans shook his head. "that was a good one, i'll admit."

Lori quickly embraced Mettaton and gave him a peck on the cheek.
"Glad you could make it."

"Glad to be here, darling, really."

She nodded and plopped down on the couch. "What you thinkin' 'bout watchin', scooterpup?"

Frisk shrugged, still scrolling through choices on Netflix. Everyone was in the living room, talking softly among themselves or watching the options Frisk scrolled through. Alphys was getting excited at every anime choice, Undyne skeptical about the ones that didn't look like they'd have much action. Frisk paused over a movie called "Stardust" and looked at Lori questioningly.

"It's a pretty good movie, and I personally would say that it's halfway age appropriate. Go ahead."

Frisk put the movie on and sat the remote off to the side, staring intently at the television. They seemed thoroughly invested in the movie, jumping slightly at the first death. Asgore and the others arrived en masse a few moments later, so the movie was paused, and the group gathered in the dining room.

Lori cleared her throat and clasped her hands in front of herself nervously. "This is a day about giving thanks. About spending time with family, and close friends, and loved ones. Lots of humans forget about the thankfulness, and stick to stuffing their faces with food and planning where they're going to spend way too much money the next day, not taking a moment to be thankful for what they already have. And while the eatin' part is great too, and we're sure as hell gonna get to that bit in a few, I'm sure that we all have a lot to be thankful for. For starters, that we all were well enough to be able to be here today, and that we have each other.

"I can honestly say that I consider everyone in this room some kind of family. You all hold a very special place in my heart. I...I don't know if I'd be adjusting as well as I am, or if I'd even still be here, if it weren't for all of the love and support I've gotten from all of you. So thank you, all of you. You are all what I am most thankful for this Thanksgiving. Truly."

Lori clapped her hands together and smiled. "Right! Enough of the sappy hoopla. E'rry body take a seat so's we can eats!"

The dining room table, which had been extended to the max length with all five leaves, was extended even further with two additional card tables. Frisk sat between Lori and Toriel, and Toriel was beside Asgore, tittering softly as he said something to her. Alphys and Papyrus were on either side of Undyne, and Mettaton had taken the end next to Papyrus. The dogs were all in a row, and everyone else was seated fairly heater-skelter. Grillby was the last to be seated as he finished bringing the last of the food out, and took the last available space, the one to Lori's right.

Sans watched Lori in between bites and drinks. The surrounding

conversations made a fair amount of noise, and he couldn't pick out which one was specifically hers, but he could see her talking happily with the fire elemental, who was crackling warmly beside her. Sans thought it was odd to see his normally reserved friend being so open with someone, but was glad to see him seemingly happy. While he was still wary of Lori, he trusted her enough to not do anything stupid while he was in plain sight, watching her openly.

Granted, she hadn't tried anything as of yet, but that didn't mean that she wouldn't. He remembered all too well how easily Frisk had strayed down the wrong path. Sometimes, nothing much came of it. Other times, however? Genocide, or as close as the child could come to it.

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The chorus of greetings as the door opened caused Grillby to glance up from the glass he was drying, resuming his task when he saw Sans approaching the bar.

"grillbs."

"Sans." He reached under the counter and pulled out a bottle of ketchup for his friend.

"thanks. say, what were you n lori talking 'bout the other day. you seemed to really be enjoying yourself." Sans grinned. "you got a thing for the human?"

Grillby's rolled his eyes, put the glass up, and began to dry another. "She reminds me of someone. While it's nice, she's not for me. Too painful." A small, sad smile formed on his features.

Sans nodded. "'m sorry. didn't know she reminded you of kaylen."

"The usual, old friend?"

Sans nodded. "yeah. paps is watching frisk for tori tonight, so i'm on m' own for dinner tonight."

"Doesn't Lori normally watch Frisk?"

Sans shrugged. "she was busy or somthin' tonight."

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Lori gave a soft sneeze and rubbed her nose With her unoccupied hand. "Someone must be talking about me." She finished putting away her athame and boline in the small granite chest on her altar and replaced the candles in her storage space inside the marble structure. She gently wrapped her crystals in their silk and nestled them in the granite chest next to the small silver blades before closing it gently and placing it next to the candles within the altar and closing the small doors that concealed the storage space.

The full moon hung low and beautifully in the sky, and the late November chill finally seeped deep into Lorilai's joints. "To shower, or to draw down the moon and _then_ shower?"

She stood and turned towards her house, tired of the cold, gasping in surprise at the eerie figure there, the moonlight reflecting off the pale bones of it's damaged skull and hands, seemingly suspended over a black void that absorbed the night around it as much as possible. Lori fought back her startles scream and swallowed the lump that had formed in the back of her throat. "G-Gaster?"

***NEED HELP. YOU HELP.**

Lori nodded slowly. "What do you need help with? You seem less sluggish than last time."

***YOUR SOUL MORE FUSED. EASIER TO SEE ME. **

Lori nodded. "Ok. I guess I can understand that. What do you need help with?"

***MADE MISTAKE LONG AGO. WANT FORGIVENESS. **

"Forgiveness from whom? I only just met you recently, so it can't be me."

***MY...SONS. **

End
file.